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ABSTRACT

Two purposes underlay this study--to determine the relationship between closed-mindedness and reading comprehension, and to test a particular rationale for the teaching of literature. Serving as background material were research findings in three areas: (1) dogmatism, tests of dogmatism, the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, and education-oriented research upon dogmatism; (2) the effect of attitudes upon reading comprehension and upon interpretation of literature; and (3) tests of literary appreciation and the analysis of responses to literature. Twenty sample students, from similar socioeconomic backgrounds and with similar intellectual abilities, were administered the Davis Reading Test (DRT) after which they read and recorded their spontaneous responses to "The Secret Room" by Alain Robbe-Grillet. Open-minded students were found to have higher DRT reading comprehension scores and to read voluntarily a greater number of books than closed-minded students. No appreciable differences were found in the students' written responses to the short story. Tables of findings, a summary and code list of the Purves schema for literary responses, and a bibliography are appended. (JMC)

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DOGMATISM AND READING:

THE EFFECTS OF DOGMATISM UPON READING COMPREHENSION, AMOUNT OF VOLUNTARY READING AND RESPONSE TO A LITERARY SELECTION

TE 002 184

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dogmatic Thinking

The French call the Germans "cabbage heads"; the Germans call the neighbors to the east "Polish cattle"; and the Poles call the Ukranians "reptiles." In South Africa, as Allport has noted, the British are against the Afrikaner; both are against the Jew; all three are opposed to the East Indian; and all four conspire against the native black.[1]

Prejudice against one's fellow man is universal and its forms are varied. Describing women, Lord Chesterfield once wrote:

> . . . They have an entertaining tattle, and sometimes wit; but for solid reasoning, good sense, I never knew in my life one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four and twenty hours together . . . . [A man of sense] neither consults them about, nor trusts them with serious matters . . . . Women are much more alike each other than men; they have in truth but two passions, vanity and love: these are their universal characteristics.[2]

While Chesterfield's misogyny may be more feigned than real, the fact remains that prejudice based on nationality, religion, or sex is all too real.

The word prejudice is derived from the Latin word praejudicum which meant a judgement based on previous decisions and experiences. Presently, the term refers to the favorableness or unfavorableness that

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[1]Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1954) p. 1.

[2]Lord Chesterfield, The Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to his Son. C.Strachey, Ed. (New York: G.P.Putnam's, 1925), Vol.II, p. 5.

accompanies an "unsupported judgement." A New English Dictionary offers this definition: "A feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or not based on actual experience."[3] While many prejudices seem to be based on overblown generalizations, some are misconceptions springing from erroneous information.

Allport suggests a simple test to help one distinguish between errors of judgement and prejudice: "If a person is capable of rectifying his erroneous judgements in the light of new evidence, he is not prejudiced. Prejudgements become prejudice only if they are not reversible when exposed to new knowledge."[4]

Rokeach suggests that prejudice is not directed solely toward individuals. The closed-minded person is frequently prejudiced against ideas. Certain ideas the closed-minded person cannot accept, even in the light of new evidence. Rokeach feels that the closed-minded person filters through only that information which enhances the self. He writes:

> Every person must be able to evaluate adequately both the relevant and irrelevant information he receives from every situation. This leads us to suggest a basic characteristic that defines the extent to which a person's system is open or closed; namely, the extent to which the person can receive, evaluate and act on relevant information received from the outside on its own intrinsic merits, unencumbered by irrelevant factors in the situation within the person or from the outside. Examples of irrelevant internal pressures that interfere with the realistic reception of information are unrelated habits, beliefs, and perceptual cues, irrational ego motives, power needs, the

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[3] A New English Dictionary, Sir James A.H. Murray, Ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), Vol.VII, Part II, p. 1275.

[4] Allport, op. cit., p. 9.

> need for self-aggrandizement, the need to allay anxiety, and so forth.[5]

Commenting on the public's susceptibility to stereotypes (a word which he coined), Lippmann advises:

> . . . If in that philosophy [of life] we assume that the world is codified according to a code we possess, we are likely to make our reports of what is going on describe a world run by our code. But if our philosophy tells us that each man is only a small part of the world, that his intelligence catches at best only phrases and aspects in the coarse net of ideas, then, when we use our stereotypes, we tend to know that they are only stereotypes, to hold them lightly, to modify them gladly.[6]

The closed-minded individual is then one whose Weltanschauung is affected by previous beliefs which may not be modifiable in the light of new evidence. Allport gives us some insights into the prejudiced personality. He feels that seven specific characteristics mark the prejudiced personality.[7]

1. The prejudiced personality seems ambivalent toward parents. In a study of anti-semitic women college students, the investigators found that without exception, these girls declared that they liked their parents. However, evidence on a Thematic Apperception Test seemed to indicate that these young women harbored much hostility toward their parents, much more

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[5]Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1960) p. 57.

[6]Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1922), p. 60.

[7]Allport, op. cit., pp. 395-409.

than did non-prejudiced students in the comparative control group.[8]

2. The prejudiced person has a rigidly moralistic view. He is inclined to be harsh in his moral judgements. He strictly insists on cleanliness, good manners and conventions.

3. The prejudiced individual tends to dichotomize in his cognitive operations. A victim of "two-valved" logic, he displays a tendency to bifurcation. Prejudiced males, for example, more often subscribe to the proposition that there are only two kinds of women--the pure and the bad.

4. The prejudiced person has little tolerance for ambiguity. He has a need for definiteness. He has also a tendency to cling to past solutions. The need for definiteness is likely to lead to a constriction of cognitive processes, as the close-minded individual fails to see all relevant sides to his problem.

5. The prejudiced personality tends to see qualities in others that he should see in himself but does not. He feels that he has little control over his destiny.

6. The prejudiced individual needs social order. Research shows that prejudiced people are more devoted to institutions than are the unprejudiced. Anti-semitic college girls are more wrapped up in their sororities; they are more institutionally religious; and they are more intensely "patriotic."

7. The prejudiced personality is an authoritarian. He looks for a hierachy in society. He feels the need for discipline. Even by the age of seven, the authoritarian child is distressed unless the teacher gives

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[8] Else Frenkel-Brunswick and R.N. Sandford "Some Personality Factors in Anti-Semitism," Journal of Psychology, XX, 1945, pp. 271-291.

him instructions what to do and makes his assignments definite and authoritative.[9]

Literature and Dogmatic Thinking

One's biases also affect reading comprehension. In Practical Criticism, I.A. Richards discusses some of the attitudinal sets which prevent the reader from clearly apprehending the author's meaning. Describing misinterpretations of poems, he writes:

> We have to note the powerful, very pervasive influences of mnemonic irrelevances. These are the misleading effects of the reader's being reminded of some personal scene or adventure, erratic associations, the interference of emotional reverberations from a past which have nothing to do with a poem . . . .
>
> Stock Responses occur when a poem seems to, or does, involve views and emotions already fully prepared in the reader's mind, so that what happens appears to be more of the reader's doing than the poet's. The button is pressed, and then the author's work is done, for immediately the record starts playing in quasi-(or total) independence of the poem which is supposed to be its origin or instrument . . . .
>
> Doctrinal Adhesions present another troublesome problem. Very much poetry--religious poetry may be evidenced--seems to contain or imply views and beliefs, true or false, about the world. If this be so, what bearing has the truth-value of the views upon the worth of poetry? Even if it be not so, if the beliefs are not really contained or implied, but only seem so to a non-poetical reading, what should be the bearing of the reader's conviction, if any, upon his estimate of poetry?[10]

McCaul demonstrated that one's prejudices affect reading comprehension in an experiment conducted a few days prior to the 1940 American

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[9] B.J.Kutner, Patterns of Mental Functioning Associated with Prejudice in Children, (unpublished) Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard College Library, 1950.

[10] I.A.Richards, Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929). pp. 13-14.

election.[11] Three groups of students were given a short essay about the exploits of a leader-figure. All papers were identical except that the hero was given different names. In one set of papers, the hero was known as Tom, in another Franklin Roosevelt, in the third Adolf Hitler. The following are some of the findings of the study.

1. Pupils' initial attitudes tended to affect their interpretation of the experimental material, particularly in respect to the motives they ascribed to persons about whom they read--Tom, Roosevelt, or Hitler. Pro-Wilkie students did not react as favorably to Roosevelt as those for the Democratic candidate. Those who could justify Hitler's invasion of Poland predictably did not react as unfavorably to Hitler as those who were ardently anti-Nazi.

2. The higher the grade level, the greater the influence of attitudes upon interpretation.

3. The reading interpretation of boys seemed to be more highly influenced by attitude than did the interpretation of girls.

4. The less the reading initially suggested an interpretation, the more the interpretation was influenced by the reader's attitudes.

McCaul concludes:

> When [a man] reads, he is as much a dupe of his attitudes as he is under any other circumstances, for his predispositions subtly mould his responses into interpretations which harmonize with his attitudes and yet which would not be warranted by the content of the printed page itself.[12]

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[11] Robert McCaul, "The Effect of Attitudes upon Reading Interpretation" Journal of Educational Research, XXXVII (Feb., 1944), pp. 451-457.

[12] Ibid, p. 456.

Squire in a study of adolescents' responses to four short stories lists among the sources of difficulty the influence of prior experience and attitudes.[13] Crossen,[14] Groff,[15] and McKillop[16] have also demonstrated that the attitudes which the reader brings to the content of a passage affects his comprehension of it.

Statement of Purposes

The purposes of this study are twofold: (1) to determine the relationship between closed-mindedness and reading comprehension and (2) to test a particular rationale for the teaching of literature.

More specifically, the objectives of the study are to determine answers to the following questions:

1. Does closed-mindedness, as a personality trait, adversely affect reading comprehension? Do closed-minded students generally get lower scores than their open-minded peers on standardized tests of reading comprehension?

2. Is the degree of one's dogmatism related in any way to the amount of one's voluntary reading?

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[13] James Squire, The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories, Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1964.

[14] Helen J. Crossen, "Effects of Attitudes of the Reader Upon Critical Reading Ability." Doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 1946.

[15] Patrick J. Groff, "Children's Attitudes Toward Reading and Their Critical Reading Abilities in Four Content-type Materials," Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1955.

[16] Anne S. McKillop, "The Relationship between the Reader's Attitude and Certain Types of Reading Responses." New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952.

3. Do closed-minded students respond to a literary selection differently than open-minded students?

4. Are there differences between males and females in their written responses to a literary selection?

The second purpose of the study deals with a particular rationale for the teaching of literature. Many English teachers subscribe to the view that the "primary aim for the study of literature is to help students respond sensitively to the literary use of language so that they can read works as works of literature."[17] In this view:

> the common function of all works of literature is to evoke in a reader an experience of order . . . . Perception of order is the source of aesthetic pleasure . . . . Whether the reader is reading a biography or a novel, if he is responding to the organization of language as it directs him, he is making the work function as literature: he is having an aesthetic experience.[18]

It is generally recognized that one of the principal desiderata of high school literature programs is simply to get students to read books--novels or non-fiction--voluntarily. This view is implicit in Fowler's comment about traditional courses in literature: they "have been notoriously unsuccessful in producing students who leave high school with a taste for reading and a habit of regularly reading good books as part of their leisure recreation." [19] A similar view was presented

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[17]Geraldine Murphy, The Study of Literature in High School. (Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdel, 1968), p. 34.

[18]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[19]Mary E. Fowler, Teaching Language Composition and Literature (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 365.

in articles which indicate that only one-quarter to one-third of Americans read as much as a book a month,[20,21] and in a book which indicated that more than a quarter of U.S. college graduates had not read a single book during the year 1959.[22]

To be more specific, in this rationale for teaching literature close-reading and analysis of literary works are stressed. The role of the teacher is to help the student apprehend the author's meaning, both intellectually and affectively, and to help the student perceive the true organic nature of a work of literature. In this view, a literary selection--a poem, for example--has one best interpretation. If a student learns to determine best meanings, he will have more aesthetic experiences with literature and will presumably read more books--fiction and non-fiction--than he might otherwise.

Teachers who accept and support a second rationale for teaching literature argue that a literary selection does not permit a best interpretation; that it is in fact recreated each time a reader reads the work. Since there are no correct interpretations, the act of appreciating literature involves the reader coming to grips with a piece of literature in his own terms. It is this struggle that fosters apprec-

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[20]Bernard Berelson, "Who Reads Books and Why," Saturday Review, XXXIV, 1951, p. 8.

[21]John Timmerman, "Do Illiterate A.B.'s Disgrace Us All?" College Composition and Communication, VIII, 1957, pp. 50-56.

[22]Reading For Life: Developing the College Student's Lifetime Reading Interest, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: The University of Michigan Press, 1960). p. 4.

iation. Since appreciation leads to more extensive reading, the teacher should allow students to face literature in their own terms as frequently as possible, devoid of unnecessary teacher intercessions, namely close-reading and intensive analysis of teacher-selected literary works.

As indicated earlier, a purpose of this study is to test the former rationale. It has been pointed out that a student's attitudinal set may prevent the student from clearly apprehending the author's meaning. (Granting for a moment that closed-mindedness does indeed affect reading comprehension--which we hope to show), if one ascribes to the former rationale, then the closed-minded student is more likely not to apprehend clearly the meaning an author wishes to convey in a literary selection; as a result (if this rationale is valid) the closed-minded student will have fewer aesthetic experiences with literature and will, therefore, voluntarily read fewer books--either fiction or non-fiction. If it is shown that closed-mindedness does affect reading comprehension and response to literature but not the amount of leisure reading, then doubts will be cast upon the emphasis of close reading and intensive analysis of teacher-selected literary works.

Assumptions and Hypotheses

In this study, the following assumptions are made. First, it is assumed that the personality trait of closed-mindedness is a reality; second, that the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale[23] is a valid instrument

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[23]Rokeach, op. cit.

with which to ascertain the degree of one's open-and closed-mindedness; third, that the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test, Gamma, Form AM, BM, C and D,[24] and the Davis Reading Test, Series 1[25] are valid instruments; fourth, that the quantity of reading done voluntarily is an indirect measure of favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward reading; fifth, that students have responded accurately and honestly to the tests and questionnaires administered them.

In this study, the following hypothesis will be tested. When I.Q. is controlled

(1) there is no statistically significant difference at the .05 level between extreme open-(Group A) and extreme closed-minded students (Group B) on the comprehension portion of the Davis Reading Test, Series 1, Form 1A;

(2) there is no statistically significant difference at the .05 level between Group A and Group B in the number of books--fiction and non-fiction--that students reported to have read voluntarily during the previous four months;

(3) in students' written responses to a single short story there are no differences of ten percentage points between Groups A and B in any sub-category as analyzed according to the Purves schema of content analysis;[26]

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[24]Arthur S. Otis, The Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test, Gamma (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1962).

[25]Frederick B. Davis and Charlotte Croon Davis, Davis Reading Test, Series 1, Form 1A, (New York, The Psychological Corporation, 1957).

[26]Alan C. Purves, The Elements of Writing About A Literary Work: A Study of Response to Literature. Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1968.

(4) there are no differences between males and females on any of the evaluative criteria tested in Hypotheses 1-3.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. In view of the diversity of reading material subsumed under the rubric of literature, it was necessary to limit the study to the short story. The choice of this genre seemed justifiable in terms of time and in light of research findings which indicate that secondary school students read more fiction than any other type of material.

Another limitation may involve the selection of the short story analyzed. In this study, students' reactions to a short story were classified according to the Purves system, and it may be argued that different literary selections may elicit different kinds of responses. However, it has been shown that subjects tend to respond in the same way to diverse literary selections[27] and since all the subjects were provided the same stimulus, differences in responses were deemed a function of personality.

A third limitation involves the statistical sampling. Twenty students participated in the study. These students were drawn from a population of approximately 150 students, those in the English 30 classes in the Separate and Public School districts in Lethbridge, Alberta. Therefore, the findings of the study are not applicable to the universe

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[27]Charles Cooper, "Preferred Modes of Literary Response: The Characteristics of High School Juniors in relation to the Consistency of Their Reactions to Three Dissimilar Short Stories." Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1969.

of secondary school students but only to those students who comprised the study population.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Discussed in this chapter are research findings in three areas: (1) studies related to dogmatism, tests of dogmatism, the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, and education-oriented research upon dogmatism; (2) studies related to the effect of attitudes upon reading comprehension and upon interpretation of literature; and (3) studies related to tests of literary appreciation and to the analysis of responses to literature.

Research upon dogmatism is relatively recent and most studies reported in this chapter have been completed within the last twenty years. Although many studies have dealt with the effect of reading upon attitudes, there is a paucity of research relating the effect of prior attitudes upon reading. Numerous studies, however, have appeared regarding tests of literary appreciation and the analysis of responses to literature. These have been reported in the research summaries of Russell,[1] Meckel[2] and Squire.[3]

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[1]David H. Russell, "Some Research on the Impact of Reading," English Journal, IIII (Oct., 1958), pp. 398-413.

[2]Henry C. Meckel, "Research in Teaching Composition and Literature." Handbook of Research on Teaching (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 966-1006.

[3]James Squire, "English Literature," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: MacMillan, 1969), pp. 461-473.

Findings Related to Dogmatism

Reported is research related to dogmatism and tests of dogmatism. The majority of the research described in this chapter has been undertaken or reported in the last two decades. Although dogmatism as a personality trait had been described earlier, it has been reported that during the first three decades of this century only two major works dealing with the effect of prejudice upon personality structure have appeared.[4]

Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson and Sandford[5] compared subjects with extreme scores on a test of ethnocentrism, individuals highly ethnocentric and intolerant being compared to those highly liberal and tolerant. Studies of the former subjects revealed a pattern of nine authoritarian personality traits: conventionalism, submission to idealized authority figures, hostility toward those violating social norms, dislike of subjectivity, superstitiousness and stereotypy, preoccupation with strength and toughness, destructive cynicism toward human nature, tendency to project unacceptable impulses, and exaggerated concern with sexual "goings on."

Smith, Bruner and White[6] studied in depth the attitudes of ten mature men with particular reference to the relationship of attitudes to the personality as a whole. Allport summarized studies on prejudice

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[4]M.Brewster Smith, Jerome Bruner, and Robert W. White, Opinion and Personality (New York: Wiley, 1956), p. 1.

[5]T.W.Adorno, E.Frenkel-Brunswick, D.J.Levinson and R.N.Sandford, The Authoritarian Personality (New York: Harpers, 1950).

[6]Smith et.al, op. cit.

describing personality traits of the prejudiced and unprejudiced personality.[7]

Rokeach[8] developed a dogmatism scale to determine the extent of subjects' open- and closed-mindedness as well as an opinionation scale to determine the degree of subjects' liberalness or conservativeness. Rokeach postulated a direct relationship between congruence of belief systems and friendship. He found that subjects rating high in close-mindedness expressed greater dislike for religions dissimilar to their own than did those subjects who ranked low in dogmatism.

Several contradictory studies concerning the relationship between dogmatism and classroom learning have been reported. Ehrlich[9] administered the Dogmatism Scale and an objective true-false test on sociological knowledge to 100 college students in an introductory sociology course. He found (1) that dogmatism is significantly and inversely related to learning and (2) that the relationship between dogmatism and classroom learning is independent of academic aptitude.

Christensen,[10] replicating Ehrlich's earlier study but with 166 college students in an introductory psychology course, found no confirm-

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[7]Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1954).

[8]Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1960).

[9]H.J.Erlich "Dogmatism and Learning," Journal of Educational Research, XXXXII, 1961, pp. 148-149.

[10]C.M.Christensen, "A Note on 'Dogmatism and Learning'." Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXVI, 1963, pp. 75-76.

ation of the earlier finding that the Dogmatism Scale predicted classroom learning. There was positive evidence, however, for the previous finding that dogmatism and aptitude are independent.

Costen,[11] also replicating Ehrlich's study, likewise failed to confirm the earlier finding that course achievement was related to dogmatism. He speculated (1) that there may be more than one kind of dogmatism and (2) that dogmatism may be differentially related to learning, depending on the particular nature of the learner's dogmatism.

Zagona and Zurcher[12] tested out a population of 517 students the thirty highest and the thirty lowest scorers on the Dogmatism Scale. Placing these sixty students in a special psychology class, they found that measures of verbal ability, the ability to form remote-verbal associations, and performance in mid-semester examinations were significantly different between groups, as were the nature and extent of classroom participation. Revealed were a statistically significant negative relationship (1) between dogmatism and verbal ability and (2) between dogmatism and examination grades.

In his study of the effect of dogmatism on cognitive processes Mouw[13] found that high and low scorers on the Dogmatism Scale tended to

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[11]Frank Costen "Dogmatism and Learning: A Follow-up of Contradictory Findings," Journal of Educational Research, LIX, 1965, pp. 186-188.

[12]Salvatore Zagona and Louis Zurcher, "The Relationship of Verbal Ability and Other Cognitive Variables to the Open and Closed Dimension," Journal of Psychology, LX, 1965, pp. 213-214.

[13]John T. Mouw, "A Preliminary Study of the Effect of Dogmatism on Cognitive Processes." Doctoral dissertation, University of South Dakota, 1968.

perform differently at various levels of a test based on Bloom's Taxonomy, with low dogmatic students outperforming high dogmatic students on higher level cognitive processes.

The Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Form E, has been employed in numerous educationally related research studies. Rosen[14] reported no relationship between counselor rigidity as determined by the Dogmatism Scale and vocational identity. Ramer[15] showed there was a statistically significant relationship between the open-mindedness of chief school administrators and their receptiveness to educational innovations. Tosi, Quaranta, and Funkin[16] found that open-minded fourth-year student teachers preferred the democratic style of classroom leadership, as measured by a leadership preference scale. Narron[17] showed that low dogmatic student teachers using experimental materials related to the use of clarifying procedures scored significantly higher on a recognition

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[14]Julius Rosen, "School Counselor Dogmatism and Vocation Identity" Psychological Reports, XXIII, 1968, pp. 24-26.

[15]Burton Ramer, "The Relationship of Belief Systems and Personal Characteristics of Chief School Administrators and Attitudes Toward Educational Innovation," Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1968.

[16]Donald J. Tosi, Joseph Quaranta, and R.M.Funkin, "Dogmatism and Student Teacher Perceptions of Ideal Classroom Leadership." Perceptual and Motor Skills, XXVII, 1968.

[17]Dawn Narron, "A Study of the Application of Clarifying Procedures by Selected Student Teahcers in Simulated Situations and the Relationship between Levels of Dogmatism and Performance." Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1968.

test than did high dogmatic students having access to the same materials. Testing fifty elementary education majors taking a science methods course, Dick[18] found no significant differences in achievement in science between extreme open- and closed-minded students; however, he did find that attitudes toward teaching science of the open-minded group were significantly more favorable. Hudspeth[19] found less dogmatic teachers to be more favorable in their attitudes toward educational media.

Findings Related To The Effect Of Attitudes Upon Reading

Although much research has been done regarding the effect of reading upon shaping attitudes, relatively little research deals with the effect of prior attitudes upon reading and what research there is, is not necessarily of the empirical variety. Richards[20] called attention to the misleading effects of the reader's memories of some personal scene or adventure; of erratic associations or stereotyped responses; of confusion caused by the doctrinal adhesions of the reader, especially when his beliefs countered those in the poem; and of the general critical misconceptions and technical judgements.

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[18]Roy D. Dick, "A Study of Open-minded and Closed-minded Pre-Service Elementary Education Majors Being Trained in Contemporary Service Methods," Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1968.

[19]Delayne R. Hudspeth, "A Study of Belief Systems and Acceptance of New Educational Media with Users and Non-users of Audiovisual Graphics," Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 1966.

[20]I.A.Richards, Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement: (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1929).

McCaul[21] demonstrated that the attitudes the reader brings to the content of a passage affect his comprehension of it. Jackson[22] showed that previous attitudes held by the reader influence the effects of reading on attitudes toward Negroes.

Crossen[23] showed that attitudes affect critical judgements of passages read. Experimenting with six groups of students equivalent in reading ability but with different attitudes toward Negroes and Germans, Crossen found that prior attitudes affected reading comprehension about Negroes but not about Germans.

McKillop[24] demonstrated that attitudes affect comprehension very little in terms of factual data explicitly stated but are much more influential in shaping value judgements about the material read.

Cross[25] found obstructive factors in reading comprehension included (1) influence of family and home life, (2) influence of previous experience, (3) confusion in the meaning of words, and (4) lack of attention because of unquestioning belief in the printed word.

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[21]Robert McCaul, "The Effect of Attitudes Upon Reading Interpretation," Journal of Educational Research, XXXVII, (Feb., 1949), pp. 451-457.

[22]Evalene P. Jackson, "Effects of Reading Upon Attitudes Toward Negro Race," Library Quarterly, XXXXII, 1944, pp. 47-54.

[23]Helen J. Crossen, "Effects of Attitudes of the Reader Upon Critical Reading Ability." Doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 1946.

[24]Anne S. McKillop, "The Relationship Between The Reader's Attitude and Certain Types of Reading Responses," New York: Bureau of Publications Columbia University, 1952.

[25]Neal M. Cross, "The Background for Misunderstanding," English Journal, XIX, 1940, pp. 366-370.

Groff[26] found that fifth and sixth grade children's attitudes toward certain types of content were related to their critical reading abilities of the various content types. He also showed there were differences between boys and girls in attitudes and in critical reading abilities of various content types.

Meckel[27] suggested that in emotionally unpleasant reading situations, the reader tends to reject content that suggests areas of experience in which he has emotional tension. The reader also tends to suppress or resist identification with characters associated with such content.

Squire[28] identified six sources of misinterpretation in adolescent responses: failure to grasp the essential meaning; reliance upon stereotyped thinking; unwillingness to accept unpleasant facts in interpreting characters and their actions; critical predispositions; irrelevant associations; and unwillingness to suspend judgement until the story is completed.

Findings Related To The Analysis Of Responses To Literature

The research in this section deals with the methodology of analyzing

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[26]Patrick J. Groff, "Children's Attitudes Toward Reading and Their Critical Reading Abilities in Four Content-type Materials," Doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1952.

[27]Henry C. Meckel, "An Exploratory Study of Responses of Adolescents to Situations in a Novel," Doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 1946.

[28]James Squire, The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories, Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1964.

responses to literature. A major problem in research upon responses to literature has been the development of a conceptual framework from which to operate. Meckel[29] indicates that such a framework is likely to be affected by one or more of the following variables: (1) the objectives of literature instruction, (2) the fact that literary responses are both intellectual and emotional in quality, (3) the psychological orientation of the researcher, (4) the type of literature involved, and (5) the nature of the ideas, plot situations, and characters which serve as the stimuli within a particular literary work.

Richards[30] presented selected college students with thirteen poems of unknown authorship. Analyzing the "protocols," he discovered not only stereotyped responses and difficulties in comprehension but also the effects of general critical and technical prejudgements which the individual brings to his reading. Downey[31] classified literary responses according to the psychological doctrine of identification. She presented a three-fold classification of responses: the ecstatic, where the self-conscious reader is merged with the subject he is enjoying; the participator, where the reader assumes one personality after another; and the spectator, where the reader is detached from the action and evaluates as an observer.

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[29]Meckel, "Research..." op. cit.

[30]Richards, op. cit.

[31]June Downey, Creative Imagination: Studies in the Psychology of Literature. (London: Kogan, Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1928).

Williams, Winter and Woods,[32] attempting to isolate those factors involved in literary appreciation, developed five paper-and-pencil tests of literary appreciation. Testing more than two hundred children and adolescents, they found that a general factor of literary appreciation, when correlated with intelligence, accounted for fifty percent of the variation in response, while a second factor, which accounted for twenty percent of the variance, separated readers preferring the subjective approaches of the Romantics from those preferring a more Classical approach.

Berelson[33] developed general procedures for content analysis which could be applied to the analysis of literary responses. Meckel, analyzing the freely written response of 96 high school seniors, developed a schema for content analysis which took into account both intellectual and emotional responses. McConnel developed a schema for analyzing biographies for children and young adults.[34]

Taba,[35] working with 25 eighth grade students, suggested the

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[32]E.D.Williams, L. Winter and J.M. Woods, "Tests of Literary Appreciation," British Journal of Educational Psychology, VIII, 1938, pp. 265-284.

[33]B. Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research, (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1952).

[34]G.A. McConnell, "An Analysis of Biographical Literature for Children," Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1952.

[35]Hilda Taba, Growth Perspectives on Human Relations, (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Education, 1955).

following categories for analyzing responses to fiction used to promote sensitivity to human problems; projections—attempts to understand, evaluate or explain behavior: generalizations--attempts to derive general principles governing behavior; self-references; and irrelevancies. Taba believed that her classifications revealed four types of readers: (1) those who enter into a story freely without generalizing about it; (2) egocentric readers who find meaning only in light of their own experiences; (3) egocentric readers who make prescriptive judgements about story characters; and (4) readers who project or generalize and thus find new experiences in reading.

Squire[36] analyzed the oral responses of fifty adolescent readers while reading four short stories and examined the relationship between students' literary judgements and their emotional self-involvement responses. He found that fewer literary judgements occur while adolescents read the central portion of a story. In his study, Squire employed the following categories: literary judgements, interpretational responses, narrational responses, associational responses, self-involvement, prescriptive judgements, and miscellaneous.

Wilson,[37] using a similar method for clarifying responses of college students, reported an increase in the proportion of interpretative responses over prescriptive judgements, suggesting that individuals may

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[36]Squire, op. cit.

[37]James R. Wilson, The Responses of College Freshmen To Three Novels, (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1966).

be in better control of their emotional reactions as they grow older. Wilson found that students begin their involvement with literature in a comparatively groping and emotional way with only their later responses formulated in logical ways.

Peel[38] employed Osgood's sematic differential to analyze the preferences of readers in qualities of a literary selection by applying a set of twenty scales including measures of vividness, depth, and clarity to literary selections by twelve major novelists.

Forehand[39] constructed tests to measure understanding, interpretation and evaluation of a single short story. Understanding was measured by factual multiple-choice items, interpretation by free response items coded into ten categories, and attitude by use of a semantic differential scale.

Purves,[40] examining the comments of thirteen critics and 100 high school and college teachers and analyzing the written responses of 200 children, identified 139 separate elements involved in responses to literature. These he classified into five major categories: engagement-involvement, perception, interpretation, evaluation, and miscellaneous.

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[38] E.A.Peel, "The Analysis of Preferences," in Research Design and The Teaching of English, (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1964).

[39] C.A.Forehand, "Problems of Measuring Response to Literature," Clearing House, XXXX, 1966, pp. 369-375.

[40] Alan C. Purves, Elements of Writing About A Literary Work, (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1968).

Using this method of analysis in a pilot study of adolescents' reaction to literature, he found important differences in the reaction of 13-year-old American, British, German and Belgian students, differences which were attributed to varying educational and cultural patterns.

CHAPTER III

RATIONALE AND PROCEDURES

The Research Design

The research design of this study involves four groups of secondary school students, established according to sex and to extreme high and low scores on the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale (RDS). During the spring semester, 1970, the Dogmatism Scale, Form E, was administered by their teachers to the five English 30 classes in the three high schools of Lethbridge, Alberta: one class in Catholic Central High School, one class in Winston Churchill High School, and three classes in the Lethbridge Collegiate Institute. Means and standard deviations for this population are shown in Table I.

TABLE I

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF RDS SCORES FOR TOTAL POPULATION

HIGH SCHOOL	n	$\overline{X}$	S.D.
C.C.H.S.	28	163.46	20.92
W.C.H.S.	34	168.39	21.35
L.C.I.	28	151.88	19.69
L.C.I.	26	156.58	25.57
L.C.I.	32	148.94	21.50
TOTAL	148	158.05	22.81

After determining the sample, the investigator administered during three separate 85-minute periods the Davis Reading Test, Series 1, (DRT) and directed students to respond to a single short story as well as list the books they had read during the previous four months. Statistically significant differences between boys and girls and between high and low dogmatic students (1) on the comprehension portion of the DRT and (2) on the number of books read during the previous four months were determined by use of the Student t Test. Correlations between RDS and number of books voluntarily read and between the comprehension portion of the DRT and number of books voluntarily read were determined through application of the Pearson product-moment coefficient correlation. Students' written responses to the short story were analyzed according to the Purves schema of content analysis. These analyses will be presented as nominal data.

The Sample

The sample in this study consisted of 20 students selected from a population of 148 students in five English 30 classes. English 30 in the province of Alberta is generally considered a senior college preparatory course.

The students in the sample lived in Lethbridge, a city of 39,000 located in the southwestern portion of Alberta, approximately 60 miles north of the United States' border. The students in the sample came from similar socio-economic backgrounds (as determined by parental occupation) and seemed to have similar intellectual ability. Although standardized intelligence tests contain built-in margins of errors and cannot be totally valid, they can give one a fair approximately of the

intelligence of a particular group. The following are the mean I.Q. scores for the four groups in the study on the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test administered during the previous year: closed-minded male, 117; closed-minded female, 116; open-minded male, 122; open-minded female, 116. The Student t Test was employed to ascertain whether there was a statistically significant difference in intelligence between high and low dogmatic students in the sample. The resulting t ratio of 1.20 was not statistically significant.

Rokeach Dogmatism Scale score, the Otis I.Q. and parental occupation (a rough index of socio-economic status) are shown in Table 2.

Testing Procedures

The Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Form E, was administered by the students' English 30 teachers during the initial fifteen minutes of each respective class period. The Dogmatism Scale was represented by teachers as a student questionnaire regarding social issues. Students were instructed to read the directions which accompanied the scale: they were to respond to each statement with a single numerical score ranging from +3 to -3 indicating the extent of their agreement or disagreement.

The study sample of 20 students was tested by the investigator in three separate 85-minute sessions. These sessions were conducted on two consecutive days in the conference rooms of two high schools and in a classroom of the third. These rooms were quiet and generally well ventilated.

The Davis Reading Test, Series 1, Form 1A, was administered by the investigator. Procedures which are outlined in the accompanying test

TABLE 2

ROKEACH DOGMATISM SCALE, OTIS I.Q.,
AND PARENTAL OCCUPATION

STUDENT	RDS	I.Q.	PARENTAL OCCUPATION
MH 1*	205	119 OTIS A	Bread Deliveryman
MH 2	215	119 OTIS A	Bread Deliveryman
MH 4	212	114 OTIS A	Engineer
MH 4	187	117 OTIS D	Railroad Engineer
MH 5	184	114 OTIS A	Electrical Repairman
FH 1	200	111 OTIS B	Newspaper Editor
FH 2	205	120 OTIS A	Carpenter
FH 3	195	118 OTIS C	Receptionist
FH 4	194	121 OTIS C	Farmer
FH 5	195	111 OTIS A	Life Insurance Salesman
ML 1	123	127 OTIS C	Post Office Clerk
ML 2	92	122 OTIS D	Telephone Repairman
ML 3	100	134 OTIS C	Agriculturalist
ML 4	109	122 OTIS C	Milkman
ML 5	109	107 OTIS C	Salesman
FL 1	99	118 OTIS C	Mechanic
FL 2	105	126 OTIS C	Professor
FL 3	109	117 OTIS C	Partsman
FL 4	114	109 OTIS C	Telephone Repairman
FL 5	116	108 OTIS A	Yardman in Stockyard

*Male, high Rokeach Dogmatism Scale score, student number 1

manual were rigorously followed. Students were given 40 minutes to complete the DRT.

During the second portion of each testing period, students were given a sheet of paper and a copy of "The Secret Room," a short story by Alain Robbe-Grillet.[1] They were told (1) to read and respond to the short story in any way they wished and (2) to spend as much time as necessary reading the short story. When students were ready to respond to the short story, they signalled the investigator. Each student was then timed and given exactly 15 minutes to record his responses.

An attempt was made to establish a friendly and informal classroom atmosphere and to present directions in a standardized fashion. It was felt that use of such verbs as "respond", or "react" or "tell" would influence students' responses; consequently, the task was explained to the three groups of students in identical language. In an informal conversational tone, the investigator recited this script written in his own idiolect:

> You have before you a copy of "The Secret Room" by Alain Robbe-Grillet. I'd like you to read it and respond to it in any way you wish. Read it over as many times as you like. When you're ready to write about it, raise your hand and I'll time you. You can say anything about the short story you wish. We're not interested in how well you write, or how good your grammar is; we are just interested in what you have to say about the short story. Are there any questions? Okay, start reading.

If students asked questions concerning the content of their papers

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[1] Alain Robbe-Grillet, "The Secret Room" in J. Chesley Taylor (Ed.) The Short Story: Fiction in Transition (New York: Scribner's 1969) pp. 608-613.

(they did not), the investigator was prepared to rephrase directions using only the verbs "respond" or "say." After recording their responses, students were then asked to list the titles and authors of books they had read during the previous four months.

Instruments

Instruments employed in this study included the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test, and the Davis Reading Test.

The Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Form E, is composed of 39 statements which are rated according to the extent of the examiner's agreement or disagreement. The Scale, which can be represented as a questionnaire on social issues, is usually administered with a number of distracting items. Specific information about the instrument can be found in Rokeach's The Open and Closed Mind.

The Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test, Gamma Test, Forms AM, BM, C and D was administered during the previous year by counselors in the three high schools. This group intelligence test can be administered within 40 minutes. Lefever, in a generally unfavorable review of the Otis test, writes:

> In addition to the rather vague and incomplete data of the manner in which the norms were derived for the new forms, the most serious weaknesses of the revised tests appear to be the lack of percentile norm tables of any description and the failure to furnish normative data on the comparability of the two forms for each level... [However, the tests] do furnish a short and easily-scored indicator of scholastic aptitude. Such a measure if interpreted with care, can be useful to both teacher and counselor by revealing within thoroughly broad limits of

> accuracy the probable level of academic achievement for the majority of pupils.[2]

The Davis Reading Test, Series 1, Form A, which was administered to the study sample, is designed for grades 11-13. This 40-minute timed test comprises 80 multiple-choice items. Separate scores are assigned for both speed and comprehension. Reviews of the DRT which appear in the Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook are generally favorable. Raygor writes: "[This test] seems like a very well-built test by competent authors, with adequate reliability and validity, and standardized on an adequate sample of what appear to be representative students."[3] Coffman writes: "Evidence presented in the manual indicates that several forms meet high standards of reliability and validity and are of appropriate difficulty for the intended uses."[4]

Analysis of Responses

Students' written responses to the short story were analyzed according to the schema published by Purves in 1968. Working with a team of international researchers, Purves developed a means of categorizing the diverse written responses of students, teachers, and critics from several different countries. The schema was developed to provide a

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[2] D.Welty Lefever, Review of the Otis, Fifth Mental Measurements Yearbook, (Highland Park, N.J.: Gryphon, 1959). pp. 497-499.

[3] Alton L. Raygor, Review of DRT, Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook, (Highland Park, N.J.: Gryphon, 1965). p. 1005.

[4] William E. Coffman, Review of DRT, Sixth Mental Measurements Yearbook, (Highland Park, N.J.: Gryphon, 1965). pp. 1053-1054.

precise, comprehensive and critically accurate analysis of a great number of essays.

This system of content analysis placed statements into one of four main categories: Engagement-involvement, Perception, Interpretation, and Evaluation. A single category was assigned to each statement according to which of four general relationships was expressed by the statement:

> . . . the direct interacting of [the essay] writer and work . . . , the writer's viewing of the work and its author as objects, the writer's relating of the universe portrayed in the work to the universe as the writer conceives it to be, and the writer's judging of the work in relation to the artist, the universe, or the writer himself.[5]

The four main categories plus a miscellaneous heading were further subdivided into 24 subcategories, and these into 139 elements.

Analysis of students' responses was made independently by the investigator and two assistants. The elements assigned to each statement were compared and concensus on elements was generally reached. Reliability was determined by comparing the elements ascribed by the coders to a random sample of statements. The following formula employed by Squire[6] was used to correlate coder agreement: 2 x sum of agreement/sum of checked items. These were the levels of agreement for elements and subcategories between the three coders: A and B, .17 and .49; A and C, .26 and .50;

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[5]Alan C. Purves, Elements of Writing About A Literary Work, Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1968). p. 6.

[6]James Squire, The Responses of Adolescents While Reading Four Short Stories, (Champaign, Ill.: NCTE, 1964).

and B and C, .25 and .54. Since concensus on all elements could not be established, individual codings were expanded into the more general classification of subcategory, by which data in this study were reported.

Several guidelines were employed in the analysis of statements. (1) A statement was considered a word or group of words set off by terminal punctuation. (2) A compound sentence was considered as being comprised of two statements. (3) A sentence with a compound predicate was considered as being comprised of two statements when two separate elements were involved. (4) Each statement was treated as a discrete element independent of the context in which it appeared; however, if a statement were ambiguous, then the statement was analyzed in its context.

Several problems arose in the course of analysis. One major problem was that of determining the number of statements in a given sentence. Consider this sentence: "Personally the story has taught me really nothing because I can only accept it as being fiction thus having no bearing on our realistic society." Syntactically, the sentence contains only one statement since it is complex, containing a causal subordinate clause. Semantically, the sentence contains not only the kernel "The story taught me nothing" but also implicit in the sentence is the kernel "Fiction has no bearing on our society" - quite a personal and damning comment about literature (and a frightening one to the teacher of literature). Since the guidelines for analysis were largely based on syntax, the preceding sentence was considered to be comprised of a single statement.

Another major problem was that of resolving ambiguous statements.

Consider the following sentence: "Whoever is telling the story has seen such a scene more than once." The difficulty in this sentence lies in determining "whoever is telling the story"--whether he is the narrator or the author. Accordingly, the statement may involve either a conjecture about the story or an inference about the author. The ambiguity was resolved by resorting to an analysis of the statement in its context.

Selection of Short Story

The short story used to elicit responses from students was "The Secret Room" by Alain Robbe-Grillet. A Gothic short story, it presents a camera-like description of a mysterious red-colored room, with a presumably murdered woman in the foreground and a black-caped figure lurking in the shadows. The short story is totally descriptive, with no characterization or plot in the usual sense.

This particular short story was selected for a number of reasons. (1) The literary selection chosen for this story had to be reasonably short so that students could read and respond to it in the time allotted. (2) It had to be unfamiliar to all subjects. (3) It had to be one which, in the view of the students' English teachers, would elicit a quantity and variety of responses. (4) It had to contain an element of ambiguity or lack of closure which closed-minded students might find disturbing.

Determining Books Read

Students were instructed to list the titles and authors of the fiction and non-fiction books they had read during the previous four months (since the beginning of the spring semester). They were asked

to include novels they had read in their English 30 classes but to exclude all textbooks.

The following were counted in the total number of books read: (1) books with titles and authors listed, (2) books with only the title listed and (3) books with only the author listed.

If a student failed to list both titles and authors and indicated that he had read several books on a specific subject, only a single book was counted. If the student indicated he had read several books by a single author but failed to include titles or to indicate a specific number, only a single book was counted.

Students had ample opportunity to record their readings. They were given fifteen minutes during the testing session to list the books they had read. Moreover, if they had forgotten to record any of their readings, they could do so by notifying their English teachers.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Dogmatism and Reading Comprehension

The first hypothesis in this study dealt with the relationship between dogmatism and reading comprehension. If, as McCaul and others have shown, prior attitudes may affect reading comprehension, then the closed-minded individual, who may hold certain views in an irrational way, may comprehend what he reads more poorly than an equally intelligent but open-minded peer. Specifically, the hypothesis to be tested reads:

> When I.Q. is controlled, there is no statistically significant difference at the .05 level between extreme open-(Group A) and extreme closed-minded students (Group B) on the comprehension portion of the Davis Reading Test, Series 1, Form 1A.

Data on DRT reading comprehension scores appear in Table 3. Application of the Student t Test produced a t value at eighteen degrees of freedom on 2.17. Because this t value is statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence, the first hypothesis was rejected.

Dogmatism and Number of Books Read

The second hypothesis concerned the relationship between the degree of one's dogmatism and the extent of his voluntary reading. It was assumed that the number of books one reads is an indirect measure of his literary appreciation. Tested was the bit of conventional wisdom that states if closed-minded students experience greater difficulty in comprehending written material than their open-minded classmates, and reading comprehension does affect the amount of reading done voluntarily, then closed-minded students will read during a given period a significant

fewer number of books than their open-minded peers. Specifically, the hypothesis states:

> When I.Q. is controlled, there is no statistically significant difference at the .05 level between Group A and Group B in the number of books--fiction and non-fiction--that students reported to have read voluntarily during the previous four months.

Data on the number of books read appears in Table 3. Since the t value of 1.74 (with eighteen degrees of freedom) is not statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence, the second hypothesis was not rejected. However, it must be pointed out that this t value is significant at the .1 level of confidence.

Responses of Open- and Closed-Minded Students

The responses of various individuals to a literary work will vary. Rod Serling[1] discussing these differences noted that "some [T.V. audiences] will be responsive to certain subtleties of dialog, whereas . . . it goes by [another breed of audience] like a Super Chief goes by a water tank."

The third hypothesis deals not with subtleties of dialog but with differences in the number and types of responses by open- and closed-minded students. Specifically, it reads:

> When I.Q. is controlled . . . in students' written responses to a single short story, there are no differences of ten percentage points between Group A and B in any subcategory as analyzed according to the Purves schema of content analysis.

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[1] Rod Serling, as quoted in Alan B. Howes, Teaching Literature To Adolescents: Plays (New York: Scott Foresman, 1968). p. 111.

TABLE 3

ROKEACH DOGMATISM SCALE, DAVIS READING TEST COMPREHENSION SCORE, AND NUMBER OF BOOKS READ DURING PREVIOUS FOUR-MONTH PERIOD

STUDENT	RDS*	DRT (Com)**	NO.BKS. READ
MH 1	205	37	4
MH 2	215	65	3
MH 3	212	58	6
MH 4	187	87	7
MH 5	184	65	9
FH 1	200	49	7
FH 2	205	84	3
FH 3	195	56	2
FH 4	194	84	5
FH 5	195	55	2
ML 1	123	84	5
ML 2	92	98	4
ML 3	100	91	14
ML 4	109	91	5
ML 5	109	58	7
FL 1	99	80	4
FL 2	105	92	11
FL 3	109	77	6
FL 4	114	44	7
FL 5	116	87	7

* Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between RDS and No.Bks. Read = -.42 (sig. at .1)
** Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between DRT and No.Bks. Read = .26 (n.s.)

A summary and code list of the Purves schema appears in Appendix 1. The ten-percent difference (a difference two and one-half times one would expect by chance) is arbitrary and is merely employed to make the hypothesis capable of being validated.

Data indicating number and percentage of response listed by subcategories are presented in Table 4. In looking at the table, one is immediately aware that in the majority of instances, the number of responses in subcategories for both groups are very similar. In fact, an identical number of responses by Group A and B occur in the following subcategories: 220, 240, 270, 350, and 400. A difference of a single response occurs in 100, 230, 280, 310, 320 and 500, while a difference of two responses occur in 210, 260, 410 and 430. No differences greater than two percent occur in the Evaluation and Miscellaneous categories.

Differences greater than three occur in only five subcategories: 110, 130, 200, 300 and 330. Differences in the 110 subcategory can be explained by examining the elements which comprise it. Approximately half of the response elements for the low dogmatic group were scored by two students with the 110 element--Reaction to literature--comprising more than two-thirds of this total. The distribution of the 110 element between the two groups differs markedly: Four high dogmatic students accounted for the four 110 elements; eight low dogmatic students accounted for the eighteen 110 elements. A difference also appears in the 112 element--Assent. For the high dogmatic group two 112 elements are listed while none are listed for the other group. Differences in the 110 subcategory listed by element are shown in

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
CODED BY SUBCATEGORY

	OPEN		CLOSED	
SUBCATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
100	1	.6	2	1.5
110	25	15.7	11	8.4
120	20	12.6	17	13.0
130	14	8.8	21	16.0
200	8	5.0	2	1.5
210	0	0	2	1.5
220	5	3.1	5	3.8
230	12	7.5	11	8.4
240	0	0	0	0
250	5	3.1	2	1.5
260	8	5.0	6	4.6
270	0	0	0	0
280	0	0	1	.8
300	5	3.1	1	.8
310	1	.6	0	0
320	4	2.5	3	2.3
330	0	0	5	3.8
340	3	1.9	0	0
350	0	0	0	0
400	5	3.1	5	3.8
410	6	3.8	4	3.0
420	18	11.3	17	13.0
430	12	7.5	10	7.6
500	7	4.4	6	4.6
TOTALS	159	99.7	131	99.9

Table 5.

Sixteen percent of the responses of the closed-minded group fell into the 130 subcategory--Reaction to content--as opposed to nine percent for the open-minded group. Differences in this subcategory occur mainly in two elements--130, Reaction to content, and 132, Conjecture--with tallies in each instance considerably greater for the high dogmatic group. Differences in this subcategory listed by element appear in Table 6.

Classified in the 200 subcategory were the responses of five students, two of whom were in the open-minded group. The two response elements of the open-minded group were 203, Reading comprehension and 204, Style unspecified. Of the eight responses in the high dogmatic group, five were classified 203, one 204, and two 200, Perception general.

Six responses in the 300 subcategory--Interpretation--were made by four students, three of whom were in the low dogmatic group. The single response element for the high dogmatic group was 300--Interpretation general. Of the five elements for the low dogmatic group, three responses were classifed 303, Part as key. The remaining elements were 301, Citation of stance, and 300, Interpretation general.

Differences also occur in the 330 subcategory--Mimetic interpretation. Five response elements were scored by two high dogmatic students. No responses in this subcategory were made by members of the low dogmatic group.

These differences, for the most part, are negligible. In fact, the distribution of response subcategories of both groups is remarkably similar, with the widest margin of seven percent appearing in only

TABLE 5

DIFFERENCES IN 110 SUBCATEGORY
LISTED BY ELEMENT

STUDENT	OPEN	CLOSED
1	110, 110, 110, 110, 110 111, 111	112
2	110	110
3	110	
4		110
5		111, 111
6	110, 110, 110, 110, 110 110, 110	110, 111
7	111, 111, 110	
8	110, 113, 113	112
9	110, 111	113, 111
10	110	110

TABLE 6

DIFFERENCES IN 130 SUBCATEGORY
LISTED BY ELEMENT

STUDENT	OPEN	CLOSED
1		130, 130, 130, 130, 130, 130
2	133	132, 132, 131, 132, 132, 130
3	130, 133	131, 130
4	130, 130	132, 133
5	132, 132	132
6	130	
7		
8	130, 130, 132, 130	130, 130
9		130
10	130, 131	130

two subcategories. Although minor differences do appear, it must be noted that since no differences of ten-percentage points appear in any subcategory, the third hypothesis was not rejected.

Differences Between Males and Females

The fourth hypothesis reads:

> When I.Q. is controlled, there are no significant differences between males and females on any of the evaluative criteria tested in hypothesis 1-8.

This hypothesis was not rejected. A t test determining whether or not there were statistically significant differences between males and females on the reading comprehension portion of the DRT revealed a non-significant t value of .31. Application of a t test for statistically significant differences on the number of books voluntarily read produced a non-significant t value of .74. Analyzing the written responses of males and females to a literary work, the investigator employing the Purves schema found that the greatest percentage of difference in response subcategories was merely 8.7. The number and percentage of these responses coded by subcategory appear in Table 7.

Discussion Of Questions

The following questions were first posed in the initial chapter of this study. Since findings have already been discussed, the conclusions drawn concerning these questions will be quite brief.

Q: Does closed-mindedness, as a personality trait, adversely affect reading comprehension? Do closed-minded students generally get lower scores than their open-minded peers on standardized tests of reading comprehension?

TABLE 7

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
CODED BY SUBCATEGORY

	MALE		FEMALE	
SUBCATEGORY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
100	0	0	4	2.6
110	18	13.3	17	11.0
120	20	14.8	17	11.0
130	14	10.4	21	13.5
200	4	3.0	5	3.2
210	2	1.5	0	0
220	3	2.2	7	4.5
230	12	8.8	11	7.1
240	0	0	0	0
250	2	1.5	5	3.2
260	9	6.7	5	3.2
270	0	0	0	0
280	1	0.7	0	0
300	1	0.7	5	3.2
310	1	0.7	0	0
320	3	2.2	4	2.6
330	5	3.7	0	0
340	1	0.7	2	1.3
350	0	0	0	0
400	6	4.4	5	3.2
410	6	4.4	4	2.6
420	10	7.4	25	16.1
430	9	6.7	13	8.4
500	8	5.9	5	3.2
TOTALS	135	99.7	155	99.9

C.: Since closed-mindedness seems to affect reading comprehension, it is likely that closed-minded students would get lower scores on standardized tests of reading comprehension than would their open-minded classmates.

Q.: Is the degree of one's dogmatism related in any way to the amount of one's voluntary reading?

C.: There appears to be an inverse relationship between dogmatism and amount of voluntary reading . . . the higher the dogmatism, the fewer the books voluntarily read. This relationship is reflected in the Pearson product-moment correlation between RDS scores and number of books voluntarily read: -42.

Q.: Do closed-minded students respond to a literary selection differently than open-minded students?

C.: Closed-minded students do not appear to respond to a literary work in any fashion that differs appreciably from that of open-minded students.

Q.: Are there differences between males and females in their responses to literature?

C.: No appreciable differences were found. There appears to be no typical masculine or feminine pattern of response to a literary work.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the data:

1. High dogmatic students appear to lack certain reading comprehension skills that equally-intelligent but low dogmatic students seem to possess. The mental rigidity of closed-minded students seems to affect reading comprehension of factual material.

2. The affective responses to a literary selection of open- and closed-minded students are very similar. When writing about a literary work, open- and closed-minded students seem to respond in much the same way. Only minor differences in the number and type of response subcategories as coded according to the Purves schema

appeared between the two groups. It did appear that while open-minded students seemed more predisposed to give general reactions to literature, closed-minded students reacted more intensely to content. However, in no subcategory was there a difference greater than 7.3 percent.

Differences between the two groups in attitudes toward the literary selection were not apparent. It was felt that closed-minded students might respond more unfavorably toward a short story which lacked closure. Rating each student response favorable, unfavorable, or neutral, the investigator found little difference between the two groups.

Generally, differences in responses between the two groups were negligible, and it would appear that open- and closed-minded students do not respond to literature in any predictable fashion.

3. Although a statistically significant difference in reading comprehension was found between high and low dogmatic groups, the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale appears a poor-to-fair predictor of reading comprehension scores on the DRT but is only somewhat less effective than the Otis. Pearson product-moment correlations reveal an r of -.50 for the RDS and DRT and .58 for the Otis and DRT.

4. Conventional wisdom would support the view that students who acquire more skill in comprehending what they read will find greater enjoyment in reading and will therefore read more than equally-intelligent classmates who do not read with such comprehension. This, however, does not appear to be the case. The Pearson correlation coefficient (Table 3) between the reading portion of the DRT and the number of books voluntarily read was a low non-significant .26.

5. Differences appear between open- and closed-minded students in the amount of their voluntary reading. Open-minded students read somewhat more avidly than their closed-minded but equally-intelligent peers. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Table 3) between the RDS and the number of books voluntarily read was -.42, significant at the .1 level.

6. The amount of a student's voluntary reading seems highly correlated with socio-economic background, a conclusion that is hardly surprising. In Tables 2 and 3 it appears that the higher the socio-economic status, the greater the amount of voluntary reading. Although father's occupation is only a crude index of socio-economic status, the boy and girl who reported the most books voluntarily read both came from homes where the father enjoyed a professional status.

7. Boys and girls generally comprehend what they read equally well, engage in equal amounts of voluntary reading, and respond to literary selections in much the same way. When I.Q. is controlled, there is no appreciable difference between boys and girls in reading comprehension and in the amount of voluntary reading.

Differences between boys and girls in the number and type of response subcategories were negligible. While boys and girls report different reading interests, there is no typical masculine or feminine pattern of response to a literary work.

8. The data neither lend nor deny support to those who advocate abandoning the intensive reading and analysis of teacher-selected literary works.

Although many teachers of literature may espouse the goals of making students critical about their reading and more humane in their behavior, these goals are hardly the sine qua non of literary study. If they were (and if the literature program were successful), most high school graduates could function as critics, which they cannot; and moreover, most contemporary critics (if the study of literature indeed humanized one) would be exemplary human beings, which they are not. The principal desideratum of literature study remains that of turning students into avid readers. Although the two previously mentioned goals are consummations devoutly to be wished, in the final analysis if students don't read voluntarily, the teacher of literature has failed.

Advocates of close reading and analysis of teacher-selected literary works argue that through intensive reading students read more sensitively, acquire a greater appreciation for literature, and as a result read more books voluntarily. The basis for this rationale for teaching literature is reading comprehension. Although he may use catch phrases like "reading more sensitively," the teacher who supports this view is, in effect, arguing that if the student can apprehend more clearly the author's meaning, he will more likely have an affective experience with the literary work and thus be stimulated to read other works of literature. Although the affective learning is an important secondary consideration, the development of reading comprehension skills remains the basis for this rationale.

Conflicting data in the study can lead to various interpretations about the value of intensive reading and analysis of various canonical works

selected by the teacher. Low dogmatic students who have apparently mastered certain reading comprehension skills read significantly more (at the .1 level) than closed-minded who do not possess these reading skills. However, the Pearson correlation between the number of books voluntarily read and the scores of the reading portion of the DRT revealed a low, non-significant r of .26. Because of these conflicting findings, no assessment of the value of close-reading and analytic approach to literature study can be made. Since the relationship between level of reading comprehension and amount of voluntary reading has not been made clear, it should be subjected to further empiric study as should the practice of close reading on the secondary-school level.

Recommendations For Further Study

Because of the limitations of and/or the problems which have arisen from the present study, the following are offered as recommendations for further research:

1. Because of the conflicting findings in the present study, the nature of the relationship between level of reading comprehension and the amount of voluntary reading has not been clarified. It is therefore suggested that studies be undertaken to determine correlations between scores on standardized tests of reading comprehension and the number of books students have reported to have read during a given period of time.

2. Determining sex-based differences in reading abilities and in responses to literary selections does not appear a particularly fruitful line of research. The most productive of such sex-based research

seems to be in the area of determining differences in reading interests between boys and girls, although surveys of reading interest have been undertaken countless times.

3. As reading comprehension may affect the amount of voluntary reading, so may the amount of voluntary reading affect reading comprehension. To study the possible backwash effect of the amount of voluntary reading, it is suggested that one line of research might be to compare classes engaged in guided free reading with comparable classes employing close reading and analysis, with pre- and post-tests of reading comprehension serving as the criteria of difference.

4. Based on the findings of the present study, research concerning differences in written responses to a literary work by open- and closed-minded students does not appear to be a particularly profitable line of endeavor. However, it is suggested that further studies employing the Purves schema be undertaken to (1) determine differences in responses to a literary selection by students on different grade levels, (2) determine differences in responses to a literary selection by students from different subcultures, and (3) determine differences in responses by the same group of students to different literary works.

Summary

Compared were differences between open- and closed-minded students in DRT reading comprehension scores, in the number of books voluntarily read during the previous four months, and in written responses to a literary work. Significant differences between

open- and closed-minded students were found in DRT reading comprehension scores (.05 level) and in the number of books voluntarily read (.1 level). No appreciable differences between the two groups were found in their written responses to a literary work. Because of the low Pearson correlation between DRT reading comprehension scores and the number of books voluntarily read (.26), no conclusions could be drawn regarding the relative merits of intensive versus extensive reading in the literature class.

APPENDIX I

Summary and code list of Purves Schema

Each category, subcategory, and element is given a three-digit code number. The first digit establishes the category; the second, the subcategory; and the third, the element.

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100 ENGAGEMENT GENERAL

110 REACTION TO LITERATURE

- 111 Reaction to author
- 112 Assent
- 113 Moral taste

120 REACTION TO FORM

- 121 Re-creation of effect
- 122 Word associations
- 123 Retelling

130 REACTION TO CONTENT

- 131 Moral reaction
- 132 Conjecture
- 133 identification
- 134 Relation of incidents to those in the writer's life

200 PERCEPTION GENERAL

- 201 Citation of stance
- 202 Objective perception
- 203 Reading comprehension
- 204 Style unspecified

210 LANGUAGE

- 211 Morphology and typography
- 212 Syntax
- 213 Sound and sound patterns
- 214 Diction
- 215 Etymology, lexicography, and dialect

220 LITERARY DEVICES

- 221 Rhetorical devices
- 222 Metaphor
- 223 Imagery
- 224 Allusion
- 225 Conventional symbols
- 226 Larger literary devices
- 227 Irony
- 228 Presentational elements
- 229 Perspective

230 CONTENT

- 231 Subject matter
- 232 Action
- 233 Character identification and description
- 234 Character relationships
- 235 Setting

240 RELATION OF TECHNIQUE TO CONTENT

250 STRUCTURE

- 251 Relation of parts to parts
- 252 Relation of parts to whole
- 253 Plot
- 254 Gestalt
- 255 Allegorical structure
- 256 Logic

260 TONE

- 261 Description of tone
- 262 Effect
- 263 Mood
- 264 Pace
- 265 Point of view
- 266 Illusion
- 267 Orientation
- 268 Image patterns

270 LITERARY CLASSIFICATION

- 271 Generic classification
- 272 Convention
- 273 Traditional classification
- 274 Interpretive tradition
- 275 Critical dictum

280 CONTEXTUAL CLASSIFICATION

- 281 Author's canon
- 282 Textual criticism
- 283 Biographical
- 284 Intentional
- 285 Historical
- 286 Intellectual history
- 287 Sources

300 INTERPRETATION GENERAL

- 301 Citation of stance
- 302 Interpretive context
- 303 Part as a key

310 INTERPRETATION OF STYLE

- 311 Symbolic use of style
- 312 Inferred metaphor
- 313 Inferred allusion
- 314 Inferred irony
- 315 Derivation of symbols
- 316 Inferred logic

320 INTERPRETATION OF CONTENT

- 321 Inference about past or present
- 322 Character analysis
- 323 Inference about setting
- 324 Inference about author

330 MIMETIC INTERPRETATION

- 331 Psychological
- 332 Social
- 333 Political
- 334 Historical
- 335 Ethical
- 336 Aesthetic

340 TYPOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

- 341 Psychological
- 342 Social
- 343 Political
- 344 Historical
- 345 Philosophical
- 346 Ethical
- 347 Aesthetic
- 348 Archetypal

350 HORTATORY INTERPRETATION

- 351 Psychological
- 352 Social
- 353 Political
- 354 Historical
- 355 Ethical
- 356 Philosophical
- 357 Aesthetic

400 EVALUATION GENERAL

- 401 Citation of criteria

410 AFFECTIVE EVALUATION

420 EVALUATION OF METHOD

- 421 Formal
- 422 Rhetorical
- 423 Typological rhetoric
- 424 Generic
- 425 Traditional
- 426 Originality
- 427 Intentional
- 428 Multifariousness

430 EVALUATION OF AUTHOR'S VISION

- 431 Mimetic plausibility
- 432 imagination
- 433 Thematic importance
- 434 Sincerity
- 435 Symbolic appropriateness
- 436 Moral significance
- 437 Moral acceptability

500 MISCELLANEOUS

- 501 Divergent response
- 502 Rhetoric filler
- 503 Reference to other writers
- 504 Comparison with other works
- 505 Digression
- 506 Unclassifiable

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